

MTA-1013  
5 June 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Tel Aviv Bureau -- May 1981

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

Bureau editors, Hebrew monitors and teletypists during May were preoccupied with the continuing crisis involving the positioning of Syrian and Libyan surface-to-air missiles in southern and eastern Lebanon and efforts by Philip Habib, President Reagan's special envoy, to defuse the situation by reaching a negotiated settlement acceptable to Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. The crisis and subsequent negotiations resulted in a heavy flow of Hebrew-language voice and press and press agency items on Habib's mission, Prime Minister Begin's reaction, and Israeli comment on the developments.

One of the most important bureau services was the alerting of key embassy and consulate officials to news breaks as released by the Israeli media. An example of this occurred on 24 May when Deputy Chief [ ] telephoned Habib and Ambassador Samuel [ ] and discussed (in a three-way hookup) Jerusalem Radio's handling of a statement by Prime Minister Begin on the status of Habib's shuttle diplomacy. The item in question was a 400-word report saying that Begin had announced after a cabinet meeting that diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis would continue and conveying Begin's comments on Habib's mission. The item was read to Habib and Lewis who asked for parts to be reread as they discussed the contents. The report had been translated and wirefiled within 10 minutes of receipt and Habib and Lewis thanked FBIS for its fast processing and for the telephone call, made as the item was being punched. The bureau had earlier been alerted to the intense interest in Begin's announcement by a telephone call to duty editor [ ] from Deputy Chief of Mission William Brown.

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On 16, 17 and 18 May the bureau, along with Nicosia and Jordan, worked round-the-clock to insure that no announcements of major import regarding the crisis were missed or delayed in processing. In addition, several Jerusalem Radio English-language newscasts and a Jerusalem Television late-night newscast were placed on temporary coverage and IDF radio was held on open watch.

Beginning 12 May for 10 days the Hebrew section monitored the Damascus International Service in Hebrew 0500-0630 gmt cast and wirefiled program summaries to Headquarters and the BBC. Interest in the cast had been aroused by Jerusalem radio news reports citing

Damascus Hebrew-language commentaries. However, a review by both local and Headquarters consumers of the cast summaries revealed that the service carried no unique material and merely echoed Syrian Arabic and English-language media. With Headquarters concurrence, because of current military and political developments in the area, the 0500-0630 and a 1400-1530 GMT Hebrew-language casts were placed on priority three coverage with priority one coverage to be instituted on an ad hoc basis as warranted.

A similar coverage arrangement was instituted for a new 30-minute Voice of Palestine in Hebrew cast at 1630 GMT. After perusing program summaries provided by Nicosia, consumers said the cast generally contained material previously covered on the station's Arabic-language casts.

#### B. Lateral Services

During the month the bureau continued a practice begun on 22 April, in response to a request from the ambassador, of preparing a special package of materials translated from Jerusalem television's nightly 30-minute "Mabat" newscast. The package includes a summary of the cast, plus a photocopy of each item wirefiled from that cast or repeated on the cast and previously filed, plus items translated for the ambassador deemed to be of local interest but not worthy of wirefiling. The package was so well received that, a few days after it was inaugurated, the DCM and the Counsellor for Political Affairs also requested that they be given copies. At the 22 May meeting of the country team, Lewis told the Bureau Chief that the special FBIS service was indispensable for him in keeping abreast of the many developments that have occurred in recent weeks.

#### C. Technical

Bureau technicians installed a 360 degree rotatable VHF/UHF/FM antenna on the embassy roof. The antenna, a Supercoloritone model 434, standing 25 feet above the roof, is connected to a Reaction Instrument model 414a-8 multicoupler through an RG-11 coaxial cable. The multicoupler is linked to two television sets, one used primarily by the Hebrew section, the other by the cruising officer. The latter has easy access to the rotor's direction control device to facilitate cruising operations.

II. VISITS

London editor (and former Tel Aviv TDY'er) [redacted] in STAT  
Israel on private travel, visited the bureau briefly on 4 May.

The bureau chief returned from the bureau chiefs conference  
and annual leave in the United States on 10 May.

[redacted] STAT  
Chief, Tel Aviv Bureau

Attachments: A. Production Report  
B. Filed Wordage Report  
C. Communications Report